

Maryland Judicial Ethics Committee

Opinion Request Number: 1976-05

Date of Issue: March 17, 1976

O Published Opinion **G** Unpublished Opinion **G** Unpublished Letter of Advice

Judge May Speak on Duties of Judges Before Political Organization but Leave after Speech

The Committee has considered your inquiry of February 23 asking whether the Canons and Rules of Judicial Ethics would prevent your accepting an invitation to speak before [a political club] on the duties and responsibilities of a District Court judge.

Your inquiry brings into sharp focus Canon XXVII, which prohibits a judge from engaging generally in partisan activities except to the extent necessary for his own election and re-election, and Canon XXII, which would seem to encourage any activity by a judge directed at the improvement of the administration of justice.

As a consequence, your appearance before a political organization to explain the nature of your work is not prohibited by the Canons or Rules of Judicial Ethics. It would seem desirable, however, for you to arrange to have your appearance scheduled at a time which is definitely fixed, and leave immediately after your presentation, in order that you will not be present when the routine business or other activities of the Club are discussed.